

CLARKE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
January 14, 2004 Public Meeting

7:30 pm

John H. Ender's Social Hall
9 South Buckmarsh Street
Berryville, VA 22611

At a meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Clarke County, Virginia, held at the Ender's Social Hall 9 South Buckmarsh Street, Berryville, VA 22611 on Wednesday, January 14, 2004.

Present

Chairman John Staelin, Vice Chairman Hobert, Supervisor Byrd, Supervisor Dunning, and Supervisor Weiss

Also Present

David Ash, Tom Judge, Eleanor Smalley, Bent Ferrell, William Houck, Michael McCall, Gary Hornbaker, Caren Leach, Jerry Herrmann, Hiliary Copsey and other citizens and members of the press.

Call To Order

Board of Supervisors Chair, John Staelin, called the meeting to order 7:33 p.m.

John R. Staelin Presentation

Chairman Staelin presented an overview of resolution and outlined the County's plans to design and fund the school construction program. Mr. Staelin thanked the School Board participants in the Joint Committee on School Construction and the persons in attendance at the meeting. A copy of Mr. Staelin's presentation is on file in the January 2004 Board of Supervisors Meeting Materials.

Bent Ferrell Presentation

School Board Chair, Bent Ferrell, presented an overview of the School Boards position on new school construction. Mr. Ferrell thanked Mr. Staelin and those persons in attendance at the meeting. He reviewed capacity issues in the Clarke County schools. He put forth the School Board's conclusion that space was needed in the elementary and high school level. Without construction, more trailers will need to be purchased to accommodate students.

Public Comments

At 7:58 p.m., Chairman Staelin opened the meeting for public comment.

Sharon Loveless, Millwood: Spoke in support of passage of the Joint Resolution and the construction of a new high school. She stated that a community supports those things it values.

Matt Hoff, Boyce: Spoke against passage of the Joint Resolution expressing concern regarding the impact of a 25% tax increase on the community. He urged the Board of Supervisors to consider other options.

Bud Gordon, Berryville: Spoke in support of passage of the Joint Resolution. He expressed his trust in both Boards to make the right decision. He expressed concern regarding the impact of a 25% tax increase on senior citizens.

Van Armacost, Berryville – John H. Ender's Fire and Rescue: Spoke against passage of the Joint Resolution. Expressed concern for what would happen if increases were in excess of the required 5% spending cap. He noted the increasing demands on local Fire and Rescue resources and urged the Board of Supervisors to reevaluate.

Louis Fisher, Berryville: Spoke in support of passage of the Joint Resolution and the construction of a new high school urging the Board of Supervisors to fund the entire \$33MM.

Bob Stieg, Millwood: Spoke in support of passage of the Joint Resolution and the construction of a new high school commending those who worked on the Joint Committee for School Construction for a job well done.

George Ohrstrom, Berryville: Spoke against passage of the resolution urging the Board of Supervisors to rewrite the resolution. He stated he had served on the Growth Committee. He opined that \$25MM was not enough to build a new high school and that a new elementary school could be built for less than a new high school. He opined that the athletic facilities were still functional.

Peter Oosthuizen, Berryville: Spoke in support of passage of the Joint Resolution and the construction of a new high school opining that the current resolution did not go far enough. He further stated that the County should make it as easy on the teachers as possible.

Rick Catlett, Berryville: Spoke in support of passage of the Joint Resolution and the construction of a new high school thanking those who worked on the Joint Committee for School Construction.

Pete McClean, Berryville: Spoke against passage of the resolution. He opined that there were many unanswered questions and the requested amounts have changed several time.

Jim Henry, Berryville: Spoke in support of passage of the Joint Resolution and the construction of a new high school asking that the Board of Supervisors do it right this time referring to the school construction project done in the 1980's.

Mitchell Rode, Berryville: Spoke in favor of new high school construction opining that \$25MM was a large sum of money but it is a community need quoting, "there is no try, there is only do". A copy of Mr. Rode's prepared statement is on file in the January 2004 Board of Supervisors Meeting Materials.

John Burns, Boyce: Spoke against passage of the Joint Resolution stating this \$25MM puts the children of the County into debt as well. He opined that it appeared that the School Board was preeminent over the Board of Supervisors in Clarke County. He opined that the County needed more industry stating that a gas station was the highest revenue producer in the county. He queried whether land use tax would go up by the proposed 25%.

John Rudolph, Berryville: Spoke in support of passage of the Joint Resolution and construction of a new high school thanking the Board of Supervisors and the School Board for the work they have done on this matter. He urged the Boards not to waste any more time.

Carol Marshall, Berryville: Spoke in support of passage of the Joint Resolution and construction of a new high school. She identified herself as teacher at the high school and urged support of athletics.

Kathleen Devereaux, Berryville: Spoke in support of construction of a new high school indicating that she had not intended to speak believing that she had been signing a petition not a request to address the Board of Supervisors. She thanked both Board and requested the Board of Supervisors build a new school describing the flooding of her daughter's classroom.

Randy Cabell, Boyce: Spoke against passage of the Joint Resolution thanking the Boards for their work on this matter. He urged the Boards to extend the figures out for a longer period to estimate the long-term impact.

John McCuan, Berryville: Spoke in support of passage of the Joint Resolution and construction of a new high school. He identified himself as the former principal of Boyce Elementary School and lauded student accomplishments.

Lance Kauf, Boyce: Spoke in support of passage of the Joint Resolution commending both Boards for their efforts. He noted that the County possesses a "can do" spirit and urged the Boards to continue their efforts on behalf of the children.

Mary Veilleux, Berryville: Spoke in support of passage of the Joint Resolution. She thanked the Boards for their work on this matter.

Ann Smetenik, Berryville: Spoke in support of new high school construction and renovation of the old high school as an elementary school. She identified herself as the president of the PTO at the high school. She opined that the County must improve the infrastructure to attain high levels of achievement.

Andrew Kiser, Winchester – Chairman Clarke County Education Association: Spoke in support of new school construction opining that renovation would not provide an adequate high school. He thanked the chairmen of the respective boards for their presentations. He opined that education impacts everyone in the County.

Robina Bouffault, Boyce: Spoke against passage of the Joint Resolution calling for the Board of Supervisors to table the discussion until the School Board comes up with a financially sound plan, currently scheduled to be complete by March 1. A copy of Mrs. Bouffault's prepared statement is on file in the January 2004 Board of Supervisors Meeting Materials.

Winnie McCuan, Berryville: Spoke in support of new high school construction and passage of the Joint Resolution. She noted that she was a 25-year resident of the County and the spouse of a school employee.

Sharon Brown, Millwood: Spoke in support of passage of the Joint Resolution and new high school construction opining that the schools were an embarrassment to the community.

Lori Traylor, Berryville: Spoke in support of new high school construction. She put forth that she was a representative of the DG Cooley PTO. She opined that the joint resolution looked more like a permission slip that allows the School Board to get a building plan.

Donna McDonald, Berryville: Spoke against passage of the Joint Resolution stating that she did not have enough information to make a decision either way. She commended both Boards for their hard work. She put forth that her child with Down's Syndrome was not served by the Clarke County school system. She opined that the County needs more commercial businesses.

Gary Pope, Berryville - Clarke County Fire & Rescue Association: Mr. Pope stated that he had children in the school systems and understood the needs; however, he does not wish to see Fire and Rescue suffer due to lack of funding. He reiterated that as the population increases demands for Fire and Rescue service also increase and additional staff would need to be added during the next five years. He urged the Board not to forget Fire and Rescue when considering funding issues.

Mary Gott, Berryville: Spoke in support of passage of the Joint Resolution. She identified herself as a member of the Berryville Planning Commission. She opined that the children are the number one priority.

Gina Hauser, Berryville: Spoke in support of passage of the Joint Resolution. She stated that she worked in the lunchroom opining that the conditions were deplorable. She urged the Board of Supervisors to act now.

John Hudson, Berryville: Spoke in support of passage of the Joint Resolution. He opined that new citizens were willing to pay higher taxes to build. He cautioned the Board of Supervisors to ensure that the amount was high enough.

Susan & Randy Jones, Statement: Wrote in support of new high school construction. A copy of the Jones' prepared statement is on file in the January 2004 Board of Supervisors Meeting Materials.

Stacy Sefton, Berryville: Spoke in support of passage of the Joint Resolution. She identified herself as a teacher for Clarke County and urged the Board to raise her taxes.

Sheila Stephens, Berryville: Spoke in support of new high school construction. She opined that the County needs more industry.

Richard Wise, Berryville: Spoke in support of new high school construction. He opined that this would give the opportunity to correct mistakes from the original high school construction. He put forth that Fire and Rescue personnel work to keep citizens alive and should be charging for services so they can be taken off of the tax roles. He urged those present to donate funds to Fire and Rescue.

John Hardesty, Berryville: Spoke in support of passage of the Joint Resolution. He commended both Boards for their efforts. He expressed his belief that the community would pull together and support the project.

Carter Lloyd, Berryville: Spoke in support of new high school construction. He opined that the high school was in bad condition. He stated that as a recent college graduate he takes the tax increase seriously for it will affect him. He expressed gratitude for the International Baccalaureate program.

Chris Bates, White Post: Spoke against passage of the Joint Resolution requesting that it be postponed or declined. He stated that the resolution was not about a building a new high school and asked that the School Board use due diligence when developing the plan and to further explore the renovation option for the high school.

Thomas Cammack, Boyce: Mr. Cammack thanked the Boards for their presentations that answered some of his questions. In addition, he queried where a new high school would be built; and if the Board of Supervisors had the ability to review the plans or if the School Board was given carte blanche with the funds.

Chairman Staelin stated that matters of property acquisition were conducted in closed session and that some discussion had already taken place. The School Board will devise a workable plan and the Board of Supervisors will review the plan and ask any questions prior to final approval.

Tammy Stapleton, Berryville: Ms. Stapleton thanked the Boards for providing answers to some of the questions she had. She stated that the schools did need to be upgraded. She expressed disappointment that the only option was to raise taxes. She opined that the resolution was vague and needed to be more specific. She queried whether this would be a temporary tax.

Chairman Staelin stated that it was not a temporary tax explaining that it was to cover a 25-year loan.

Daivd Wiedemer, Berryville: Spoke against passage of the Joint Resolution. He stated that his family has been in the County since 1816. He requested that renovation options be

explored. He expressed concern regarding the needs of other County agencies and what would be cut if the 5% spending cap were exceeded.

David Conrad, Berryville: Spoke in support of new high school construction. He identified himself as a teacher at the high school and a former student. He opined that the high school was cramped in the early '90's and a new high school would be an investment for the future.

Stephen Shendow, Berryville: Spoke in support of passage of the Joint Resolution. He stated that it was a civic responsibility and democracy is based on education. He commended both Boards for their efforts to "rise above " for the betterment of all. Additionally, he challenged the Boards to implement a solution that meets future needs. A copy of Mr. Shendow's prepared statement is on file in the January 2004 Board of Supervisors Meeting Materials.

Brent Emmart, Augusta, WV: Spoke in support of new high school construction. He identified himself as a physical education teacher for the County. He expressed concern for the athletic programs opining that renovation would have a negative impact. He stated that no one wins unless they get a new high school.

Amanda Mackinstosh, Berryville: Spoke in support of new high school construction. She identified herself as a student at the high school. She opined that the building was inadequate and the rising population in the County has made the situation worse. She expressed her concern regarding neglect of programs and obsolete, insufficient facilities. She requested the County build for the future not just for today.

Randy Sprouse, Berryville: Spoke in support of new high school construction. He stated that he had children in the system. He requested the School Board to study a model that could be expanded. He requested the Board of Supervisors to hold the line on the money the County will spend. He requested that the Industrial Development Authority and/or Economic Development work toward bringing in new industry to "knock Sheetz out of the top".

David Hardesty, Berryville: Spoke in support of new high school construction. He thanked both Boards for their efforts. He requested the Boards put the well being of the children first urging them to move forward for the County had waited long enough.

Kerstin Vogelbael, Berryville: Spoke in support of new high school construction. She identified herself as the spouse of a teacher, a parent of children at Berryville Primary and involved with the PTO. She asked the Boards to ensure that \$25MM is enough to do all that is necessary. She requested funding and expansion of art, music, vocational training and athletics.

Bud Foltz, Berryville: Spoke in support of passage of the Joint Resolution. He expressed amazement at the number of persons who turned out and his frustration with those who were opposed or that said they did not have enough information.

Phil Harper, Berryville: Spoke in support of new high school construction and the passage of the Joint Resolution. He identified himself as a teacher at the high school. He thanked the Boards for providing an opportunity to meet.

Philip Embury, Millwood: Mr. Embury appeared before the Board to give suggestions. He thanked the Boards for their efforts. He recommended that a campus plan be developed to allow for future expansion. He opined that funds could be gotten through endowment of buildings.

Chris Hornbaker, Berryville: Spoke in support of passage of the Joint Resolution. He identified himself as a 2001 graduate of Clarke County High School. He stated that the school had given him many opportunities. He told the Board that he would guarantee that the school debt would be paid.

Suzanne Donner, Berryville: Spoke in support of passage of the Joint Resolution. She opined that the School Board needed a solid assessment of educational programs. She stated that it was the responsibility of the School Board to develop a plan that was both realistic and idealist and that the success of the project rests with the School Board.

Chris Helinski, Berryville: Stated that many questions had been answered this evening. She thanked Barbara Byrd for being a responsible supervisor and being willing to probe other possibilities. She stated that she was saddened that people were not looking at how wisely tax dollars were being spent. She challenged the Boards to think creatively with regard to joint use of Parks and Recreation grounds and facilities, as well as the library. She urged the Boards to talk to other communities about their renovation efforts.

John Levi, Berryville: Spoke in support of passage of the Joint Resolution. He commended the Boards for their rigor. He encouraged the School Board to come up with a plan. He opined that the tax raise seemed reasonable.

Alton Echols, Leesburg: Mr. Echols appeared before the Boards to give suggestions. He recommended a 30-year loan; setting the matter for referendum; implementing a 1% tax when real estate is bought and sold and getting the State legislature to earmark tax dollars for schools, sheriff, fire and rescue; looking at land use tax.

Gary Lichliter, Berryville: Spoke in support of new high school construction. He stated that he supports both Boards. He stated that his children had gone to or were currently in Clarke County schools. He opined that a new high school was needed, as well as new athletic facilities.

Jeff Callan, Berryville: Spoke in support of passage of the Joint Resolution. He stated that over the last four years the School Board has required more money and each time the Board of Supervisors says they must increase taxes. He opined that the last four years have been better than predicted and noted that the Board of Supervisors is very conservative. He urged the Boards to move forward.

Gene Folk: Stated that he wanted it made clear that 18% of the tax increase was for school construction and 7% was for all the other government construction needs.

E. Scott Smalley, Berryville: Statement: Wrote in support of passage of the Joint Resolution. A copy of the Mr. Smalley's prepared statement is on file in the January 2004 Board of Supervisors Meeting Materials.

Alison Teetor, Berryville: Letter: Wrote in support of new high school construction. A copy of the Ms. Teetor's letter is on file in the January 2004 Board of Supervisors Meeting Materials.

At 10:42 p.m., Chairman Staelin closed the public comment portion of the meeting.

Chairman Staelin requested comments from the members of the Board of Supervisors.

David Weiss stated that for the record the Joint resolution was not about building a new high school and opined that a better job of communicating this should have been done. He requested answers to questions posed to the School Board Chair. At the time of the meeting, answers to some of these questions were not available. Supervisor Weiss expressed concern regarding the ability to live within the 5% spending cap noting the needs of other government departments including the addition of personnel.

Barbara Byrd expressed concern for the County's ability to stay within the 5% spending cap noting that the five-year average is 9.3%. She opined that the County was very frugal and still had increases of this magnitude. Supervisor Byrd reminded the Boards of the increases in retirement and insurance that will leave little, if anything, for salary increases. She opined that the Boards had worked diligently to bring County salaries to a competitive level and expressed fear that inability to maintain these salaries could result in loss of personnel.

Pete Dunning stated that a new facility was needed but noted that this will cause the County to surpass Loudoun County's school debt per capita. He emphasized that the model was based on a 5% spending cap and everyone would have to keep within that limit. Supervisor Dunning also noted increases in retirement and insurance that could negatively impact the County's ability to stay within the 5% cap.

John R. Staelin informed the audience that he was a member of the Joint Committee on School Construction. He apologized for the apprehension of the Board of Supervisors stating that this was the largest expenditure in the County's history and the first public meeting to communicate the information. The Board, as well as the public, still had many questions. Chairman Staelin stated that he was willing to postpone voting on the resolution to allow time for further review.

Michael Hobert stated that he, too, was a member of the Joint Committee on School Construction. He stated that if the 5% cap was exceeded the options would be to cut expenses or raise taxes. He opined that there had been opportunity for review and that the confusion regarding changing numbers was due to the nature of the document, which had been a work in progress. Vice Chairman Hobert expressed his belief that the Boards needed to work together to create a good school.

Bent Ferrell, School Board Chair, stated that the 5% cap would require sacrifice on everyone's part. He assured the Board of Supervisors that the School Board would do everything they could to stay within the 5% limit.

William Houck stated that he believed that a new high school was the only way to proceed; and if necessary, they would wait to construct. He expressed his opinion that \$25MM was not enough and private money would need to be raised. He informed the Boards that he has been meeting with small groups of individuals and explaining the school's needs. He read a letter from a woman's group with whom he had met.

Gary Hornbaker stated that the School Board was responsible for handling the fiduciary funds awarded by the Board of Supervisors. He expressed his belief that the Board of Supervisors was responsible to vote for the \$25MM first providing a definite commitment before the School Board could move forward with any plans for school construction. He opined that renovation of the high school would be a mistake.

Caren Leach expressed concern that the Board of Supervisors had not given the School Board options. She also stated that it was her belief that the Board of Supervisors should commit the funds first so that the School Board could set their plans.

Supervisor Weiss moved to continue the discussion of the Joint Resolution during the regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors on that begins at 9:00 am on Monday, January 20, 2004 held in the Board of Supervisors Meeting Room at the Circuit Court House at 102 North Church St. 2nd Floor, Berryville, VA 22611; and to continue for additional discussion until 7:30 pm, Monday, January 20, 2004 at the John H. Ender's Social Hall 9 South Buckmarsh Street, Berryville, VA 22611.

The motion was approved by the following vote:

Chairman Staelin	-	Aye
Vice Chairman Hobert	-	Nay
Supervisor Byrd	-	Aye
Supervisor Dunning	-	Aye
Supervisor Weiss	-	Aye

Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the Board of Supervisors is set for January 20, 2004 at 9:00 a.m. in the Board of Supervisors Meeting Room, Second Floor of the Circuit Courthouse, 102 N. Church Street, Berryville, Virginia.

There being no further business to be brought before the Board, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 11:34 pm to reconvene on Tuesday, January 20, 2004.

ATTEST: January 14, 2004

John Staelin, Chairman

David L. Ash, County Administrator